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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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CONTRACTS LET FOR SOUTHERN OYSTER STUDIES

Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced today the signing of three contracts for oyster research to be conducted in southern States under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act.

The contracts have been let to Florida State University, Louisiana State University, and Tulane University by the Fish and Wildlife Service which will supervise the work.

Studies aimed at developing improved techniques for handling, processing, freezing, packaging, and storing southern oysters and oyster products will be made. The over-all objective is to broaden the market base for these commodities.

The Florida State University contract calls for \$12,400 to be allocated over a twelve-month period for studying southern oysters from the standpoint of variations in composition and nutritive value; investigating the effects of environment, freezing, and processing on these oysters; developing new oyster products by such treatments as blanching, smoking, and breading; preparing special oyster dishes for taste panels and frozen storage tests; and investigating the fat content of these oysters as it affects quality during refrigerated or frozen storage.

The contract let to Louisiana State University earmarks \$10,000 for a twelve-month project entailing a study of variations in southern oysters due to different seasons and different producing areas, an investigation of freezing and frozen storage in connection with these oysters, development of a quality test for fresh and frozen southern oysters, and a study of oyster changes due to the presence of undesirable organisms.

The Tulane University contract calls for \$7,600 to be available over a twelve-month period for research on the "bleeding" (loss of liquor) of shucked southern oysters and for studies of "pigmentation" (color spots) found in these oysters. The work will entail probes into the physiological factors involved in bleeding, and efforts will be made to determine why the pigmentation develops.

The basic purpose of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act, which has made these research projects possible, is "to promote the free flow of domestically produced fishery products in commerce." Designed to strengthen the American commercial fishing industry as a whole, the legislation provides that an amount equal to 30 percent of duties collected under the customs laws on fishery products shall be transferred annually for three years from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior. Expenditures for any one year may not exceed \$3,000,000.

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